

# The customer impact of opening vs. closing M56 J7

## Overview

AmeySRM delivered the National Highways M6 Junction 19 Improvement scheme in conjunction with Galliford Try who completed the M56 J6-J8 motorway upgrade. They were building a new bridge across the junction roundabout to link the M6 with the A556 in both directions. Planned overnight closures on the M6 J19 and M56 J7 Westbound exit created problems as the diversion routes resulted in disruption for local residents and had negative effects on customer journey times.

However, through collaboration between the M56 and M6 J19 teams, expected pain points were shared which helped to co-ordinate a better customer service. The use of variable message signs by the M56 and new initiatives helped to engage and update customers.

[Click here to see a map of the closures](#)

[Click here to see A50 resident feedback](#)

## Challenge

The diversion route for a closure of the M56 J6 Westbound exit is the J6 to J7 Eastbound exit. During M6 J19 closures, large traffic strayed off the diversion route onto local roads, making the A50 busy and disrupting residents. The ongoing closure of J7 as part of the M6 J19 scheme meant that the diversion would be to J10 and back. This added 22 minutes on to journey times.

## Solution

The two teams worked cohesively to plan out closures, ensuring they were considerate of everyone. They took into account road user needs, journey times and those residents affected by the A50 disruption. The teams decided to plan one week with the M56 J7 open and one week with it closed, and then compare the outcome.

## Key Learnings



**Work closely with local schemes** to share traffic management plans and understand what impact your roadworks may have on each other's customers



**Multiple schemes can share customer pain points** to reduce the impact on each separate customer segment



**Schemes should consider all customer groups**, not just road users. Be aware of and manage **'roadwork fatigue'**. This refers to those customer groups who are affected by roadworks or closures carried out by previous schemes already



**Engage early with customers** to let them know about planned changes. Communication may prove to be easier with residents than motorists, i.e. writing directly to them.



**Tell customers what you've done differently**, to show that their previous feedback has been taken into consideration.

## Key Benefits



**Disruption** for both sets of customers was **reduced** from two weeks to one



**Closure** of M56 J7 allowed the M6 J19 team to contact A50 residents to **give notice** and **apologise** for any potential disruptions. 1,000 letters were delivered



**Letters led to residents getting in touch and proactive conversations** (via email, phone and text) prior to the closures taking place



**Early engagement led to new initiatives**. Two new speed restriction signs and dedicated overnight traffic police patrols were installed along the A50



Schemes provided **improved communication** to customers on the network



**Overall a better customer experience**, with reduced customer effects and improved customer engagement and insight



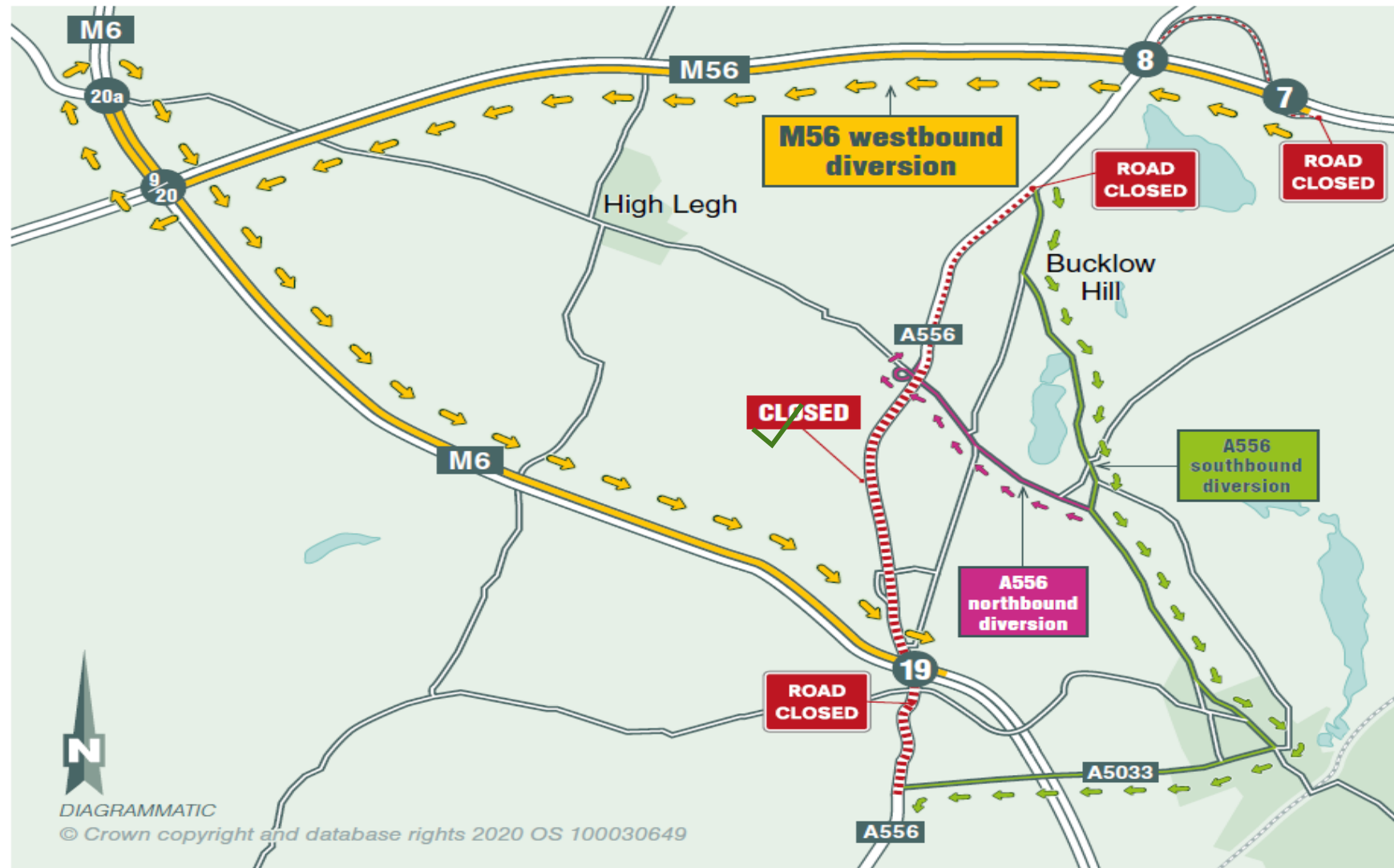
**A low number of complaints were received** regarding the M56 J6-J8 SMP closure of M56 and M6 J19 opening on the M56



For a more details, please contact: Laura Nelson - [laura.nelson@ameysrm.co.uk](mailto:laura.nelson@ameysrm.co.uk)

## Map of the closures

**Green arrows show the A50, which experiences higher traffic volumes when the A556 is closed (in red)**



[Click here to see A50 resident feedback](#)

## Feedback from residents along the A50

Dear Laura,

I've just received your letter in the post about further closures to the motorway at Junction 19. First of all, thank you for the letter and for keeping us included, it is appreciated. However, as a resident who lives on the A50 Manchester Road as the traffic speed limit goes from 40 mph to 30 mph pretty much in front of my house, I am requesting and asking kindly that you help the residents out....

What I have witnessed are so many trucks when diverted that come past our houses that speed and the road becomes very dangerous. Sometimes we cannot even cross it late at night when it's supposed to be quieter. They beep their horns at 2am in the morning waking us up. They speed so fast down that road in a hurry to get back to where they are going, and our houses shake! Literally.

I walk my dogs late at night for the last night walk, around 11 pm, I have used the pelican crossing to cross the road and been beeped at by angry truck drivers who are back-to-back and screeching through the village - when I am on the crossing - which scared me and my dogs as we thought they were not going to stop.

I also witnessed a gentleman who was crossing the road further down, who literally must have been an inch away from being run over by a truck who didn't even press his brakes as I was behind it. What we would like is a speed camera to be placed in the speed bay that really does slow down the traffic when it is there during the day. The main speeding comes at night and makes it so dangerous especially when the traffic volume is increased ridiculously due to the motorway being closed. We have had to endure this ever since the works started last year and it is only gotten worse as traffic volumes have increased post-lockdown.

If you cannot put a speed camera, could you at least put up some signs to say trucks slow down, and even one of those mobile signs that tracks the speed, especially at the point where it goes to 30 mile an hour as you drive into Knutsford (if you are coming from the Warrington side of the A50). Postcode WA16 0NX.

We the residents are truly fed up with this being dangerous, we have had a few crashes on our road where cars have sped and gone into the back of the parked cars that are in the front of our houses. It is super scary to think what could happen if a truck missed the bend by an inch they would end up in the front of our houses.

Please can you kindly take this email as an urgent request for help to keep our street safe at night.

Thank you kindly for listening I look forward to hearing back from you,

I understand that you are coordinating local stakeholder feedback concerning the roadworks relating to the M6 Junction 19 improvement scheme.

I would like to add my concerns to those of my neighbours who live on Mereside Road about the noise and disruption from traffic and HGVs overnight. Our cottage is located at the junction of Mereside Road and Mereheath Lane and has been impacted severely by these roadworks. We have suffered recently due to unplanned closures of the M6 due to accidents and the traffic, particularly HGVs, can be unbearable.

I understand that next week, w/c 27th Sept, you are considering not closing Jn7 of the M56 overnight, due to the closure of Jn6 instead. Surely the vast majority of traffic exiting at Jn7 would be better diverted to the M56/M6 interchange at Lymm. As for traffic that would ordinarily exit at Jn6 to go to Hale/Wilmslow, this would be better served by exiting earlier via the Manchester airport exit. Exiting at Jn 7 for this traffic would not make sense. Due to the changes that have resulted from the new A556(M), bypass routes to Wilmslow and Hale can now be very convoluted.

I would urge you therefore to keep motorway traffic and in particular HGVs to the motorway infrastructure and not encourage them onto minor roads, particularly overnight when roads in our vicinity are not lit and are essentially residential areas.